



MESIBOS SHEL SHABBOS

WITH RABBI MORDECHAI Z. HECHT

ויכולו • VAYECHULU

The prayer: “G-d completed”

Every Friday Night in the *Kabbalat Shabbat* – beginning of Shabbos prayers we recite the passage from Genesis 2:1-3: *Vayechulu*, that describes the Conclusion of the Divine creation of the world ex-nihilo and the infusion of the holy Shabbat into the world. Shabbat is the culmination and the crowning jewel of Creation. This passage *Vayechulu* must contain quite a significant message because we recite it 3 times every Friday night. We recite it in the *Amidah*, we recite it after the *Amidah*, and we recite it a 3rd time during Kiddush on Friday night. Why the repetition? The Abudraham explains that when Shabbat falls together with Yom Tov, the *Amidah* must contain *Atot Ve'chartanu*. Therefore, *Vayechulu* needs to be inserted after the *Amidah* instead. Once we are saying it after the *Amidah* on Shabbat of Yom Tov, we say it every Friday night as well.

The commentaries also state that there was concern that only the attendees in shul would recite *Vayechulu*, and the family at home would miss out. Therefore we also recite *Vayechulu* during Kiddush and this prayer corresponds to the 3 meals of Shabbos (*Siddur Gaonim U'Mekubalim*).

What is it about Vayechulu?

The Abudraham explains that the passage of *Vayechulu* is actually *edut* – testimony. When a Jew recites *Vayechulu* on Friday night, he is literally testifying in front of the world that Hashem created the heavens and the earth and infused the world with the blessings of Shabbat. The laws of testimony require the witness to testify as a twosome while standing. Therefore the Halachah/law is that *Vayechulu* should preferably be recited with another while standing in order to provide proper testimony.

A statement in the Talmud Shabbat 119b also demonstrates the strength and significance of the recital of *Vayechulu*.

“Rava once stated (though some say it was Rabbi Yeshoshua Ben Levi), even an individual must recite *Vayechulu* on Erev Shabbat”. “Rav Hamnunah taught that anyone who prays Friday night and recites *Vayechulu* is considered to be a partner with G-d in Creation. The Maharsha explains that just as G-d created the world with *Dibbur* – utterances, so too we become partners with G-d when uttering *Vayechulu*.”

The question is, how?

An intrinsic part of the creation of the world was that the greatness and complexities of the Creation be recognized and appreciated by G-d's prized creation – man. Until Adam and Eve were created, there was no one in the world who could relate to and understand the beauty and profundity therein. Therefore when Adam, Eve, and now you and I recite *Vayechulu* on upon accepting Shabbat, we literally partner with Hashem in the Creation of the world. As the Talmud Teaches in Chulin 5a: ‘Shabbos is so robust that whoever keeps it and verbally sanctifies and testifies to it's robustfulness it's as if one testifies to the entire Torah’ - see also the Holy Zohar, Yisro 89a that expounds upon this.

So, when we rest on Shabbos as G-d rests on Shabbos, we testify that in fact G-d has completed the work, otherwise G-d would not have rested and Shabbos would be incomplete. Being that man was created upon the completion of G-d's innate desire, the creation of the world, this is because all was ready for man to begin and embark on their mission and journey of life (*See Anaf Yosef, Dover Sholom, Iyun Tefilah*)

Actionable lesson: Notice how we recite *Vayechulu* three times on Friday night and as we recite it let's remember that we are literally testifying that G-d is our Creator as well as partnering with G-d in sustaining and fulfilling the blessings of the creation of our world. G-d rested on Shabbat and now we do too & don't worry about anything else.